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The Advisor

Mar/Apr 2007

A York County Newsletter for Professional Horticulturists
And Workers in the Green Industry

2007 Calendar of Events

- Mar 6 **Landscapers "BMP's" –Turf Management**, Yorktown Branch, York County Public Library (Route 17 & Battle Rd), Yorktown, VA. www.yorkcounty.gov/vce/upcomingevents/hort/LandscapersBMP'sFlyer_0607.pdf
- Mar 10 **Horticultural Extravaganza**, Tabb High School, Tabb, VA, sponsored by York County Office, Virginia Cooperative Extension. www.yorkcounty.gov/vce/upcomingevents/hort/hort_extrav.htm
- Mar 10 **Virginia Cut Flower Growers Conference**, Virginia State University, Petersburg, VA. Contact: agsuite@vsu.edu
- Mar 14-16 **World Floral Show**, Miami, FL. www.hppexhibitions.com/floriculture/2007/miami/
- Mar 21-25 **San Francisco Flower & Garden Show**, San Francisco, CA. www.gardenshow.com/sf/index/index.asp
- Mar 21 & 23 **Commercial Pesticide Recertification**, Mar. 21 at Chesapeake Library, Mar. 23 at Va Beach Library
- Apr 3 **Landscapers "BMP's" –Subject To Be Announced**, Yorktown Branch, York County Public Library (Route 17 & Battle Rd), Yorktown, VA. Check www.yorkcounty.gov/vce/upcomingevents/upcomingeventpg.htm for updates.
- Apr 14-22 **Spring California Pack Trials**
- Apr 20-22 **Virginia Forestry Association Annual Convention**, Williamsburg, VA. www.veforestry.org/annualconv.htm
- Apr 21 **CNU's 10th Annual Gardening Symposium**, Newport News, VA.
- Apr 21-28 **Historic Garden Week in Virginia**, Discover Four Centuries of Virginia Treasures During "America's Largest Open House, <http://www.vagardenweek.org>
- Apr 29- May 2 **61st Colonial Williamsburg Garden Symposium, Celebrating the American Garden: English Influences on American Gardens**, Williamsburg, VA. www.colonialwilliamsburg.org/conted/Images/GardenSymposium07.pdf
- May 5 **York County Master Gardener's Annual Plant Sale**, 9am-12pm, 301 Goodwin Neck Road, Yorktown, VA
- May 5-8 **All Things Organic Conference and Trade Show**, Chicago, IL. www.organicexpo.com/07/
- May 22-26 **RHS Chelsea Flower Show**, Royal Hospital, Chelsea, London SW3. www.rhs.org.uk/chelsea/2007/index.asp
- Jun 3-7 **9th World Congress on Parasitic Plants**, Charlottesville, VA. www.cpe.vt.edu/wcopp/index.html
- Jun 20 **Commercial Pesticide Recertification**, Norfolk Botanical Gardens
- Jul 16-18 **Virginia Society of Landscape Designers Summer Tour**, Norfolk & Virginia Beach. droselius@aol.com www.vslld.org
- Jul 16-19 **American Society for Horticultural Science Annual Conference**, Scottsdale, AZ. www.ashs.org
- Jul 19-21 **AHS 15th Annual National Children and Youth Garden Symposium**, Chaska, MN. www.ahs.org/youth_gardening/national_youth_garden_symposium.htm
- Jul 28- Aug 1 **International Society of Arboriculture 83rd Conference and Trade Show**, Honolulu, HI. www.isa-arbor.com/conference/resources/BRC_prelim_07_web.pdf
- Aug 5-12 **Silver Anniversary of Perennial Plant Symposium**, Columbus, OH. www.perennialplant.org/symposium.asp
- Aug 9-11 **SNA 2007, "The Worlds Showcase of Horticulture"**® Atlanta, GA www.sna.org/

www.ext.vt.edu

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DOLLARS & SENSE**FERTILIZER PRICE STICKER SHOCK!**

Have you locked-in your fertilizer orders and prices yet? According to Extension Specialists Mark Alley¹, some very large price increases by manufacturers are occurring for phosphate fertilizers, diammonium phosphate in particular. Nitrogen and potash prices are also being discussed as moving somewhat higher, again at the manufacturer level. This is definitely the time to have soil samples and to determine if different strategies may be needed for managing fertilizer needs, particularly phosphorus. Alley's bottom line: "check out the local fertilizer situation, get needed soil samples, and figure all options for providing adequate plant nutrients to produce economic yields and maintain soil fertility."

¹ Memo to VCE ANR Agents, Subj: Fertilizer Information, 2/21/2007.

HISPANIC PURCHASING POWER GROWS

Hispanics are the largest minority in the U.S. Virginia is one of the states with the fastest-growing Hispanic populations. Their U.S. purchasing power surged to \$789 billion in 2006 and is expected to reach \$1.2 trillion in 2011, a 457% increase in purchasing power since 1990. Their purchasing power is larger than the GNP of Brazil, Spain, or Mexico. To reach this untapped market, HispanTelligence® estimates that Hispanic market advertising expenditures will increase to more than \$3.6 billion by 2007. www.hispanicbusiness.com/research
www.ushcc.com/res-statistics.html
<http://pewhispanic.org/files/reports/46.pdf>

GARDENREADY™ SOLUTIONS – A NEW VENTURE

John Orendorff, formerly Wal-Mart's top L&G guy, is starting a new company, GardenReady Solutions. It would be a logistical and distribution operation that takes smaller growers products and redistributes to retailers. Smaller growers who don't have the production capability or logistical capability to ship product to 50 stores can still find a market for high-quality product. No indication when or where they will start-up operations. Source: GreenProfit's Buzz and Acres on Line newsletters.

**USDA DELAYS INSPECTION AND USER FEES FOR COMMERCIAL TRUCKS AND RAILCARS ENTERING FROM CANADA**

USDA's APHIS is delaying the effective date for the collection of user fees from Mar 1 to Jun 1 for inspections of commercial trucks and railroad cars entering the United States from Canada. These costs are usually passed on by the industry. *Federal Register*, Vol 72, No. 37, Feb 26, p. 8261

A MARKETING TIP FROM ACRES ON LINE

If you want to move product at retail, try two things: 1) A prominent sign saying what's fresh. 2) Tell your staff to be working with some of the plants and see if their presence doesn't attract customers to those products.

SOUTHERN LIVING® COLLECTION

A Feb 15 press release announced that *Southern Living*® magazine and Plant Development Services Inc. (PDSI) have entered into an exclusive partnership to develop and market a collection of plants throughout the US and Canada. The *Southern Living* collection will feature innovative new plants and include shrubs, trees, bedding, groundcovers, tropicals, grasses and related green goods and will be marketed exclusively under the *Southern Living* brand, consumer introduction will begin in Spring 2008 and be available via all retail channels. *Southern Living*® magazine is the 8th largest monthly consumer magazine in the U.S. (based on readership). PDSI owns and/or licenses over 50 patented plant properties, including the Encore Azalea® line which revolutionized the azalea industry. PDSI is currently evaluating growers and plant breeders in all categories. If you want to learn more, visit [PDSI](http://www.plantdevelopment.com/pdsi/nav.cfm?cat=28&subcat=132&subsub=108) on the Web.

ZEN-NOH: JAPAN'S FEDERATED AG CO-OP

ZEN-NOH is the world's largest co-op organization with total sales of \$56.3 billion in 2003 and about 12,500 employees. Of the 3 million Japanese farm households, most belong to one of its 1,010 primary-level co-ops. ZEN-NOH serves its members by purchasing and distributing materials and equipment for agricultural production and daily farm needs. It collects, distributes and markets member's ag products through its own channels. ZEN-NOH works to further develop Japanese agriculture, improve farm life and secure reliable food supplies for the nation. To ensure cost-efficient and stable operations, ZEN-NOH imports quality materials for Japanese farmers, including fertilizers, feedstuffs, liquid petroleum gas and oil. Imports from the United States include feed ingredients, feed grains, sulphate of potash, magnesium, ammonium phosphate, corrugated-fiber board, soybeans, seeds and sulphate of potash. Source: USDA's *Rural COOPERATIVES* January/February 2007 Volume 74 Number 1

SOYBEAN HULLS: A WATER POLLUTION SOLUTION?

Typically, soybean hulls end up as livestock feed. But they—as well as leftover stalks from corn and sugarcane—make an ideal foundation for a potent filtering agent that can adsorb harmful levels of lead, chromium, copper, and cadmium from contaminated waters. In just two steps, these plant residues can be converted to what's known as a "dual-functioning ion exchange resin." They become a sort of biological magnet for attracting both positively and negatively charged particles of heavy metals in water, working sort of like water softeners that draw out and replace unwanted hard-water particles, like calcium and magnesium, with ions from sodium. Adding citric acid, a widely used food additive, to plant residues produces a negative charge, while treating them with common cotton textile chemicals adds a positive one. www.ars.usda.gov/is/AR/archive/feb07/sci0207.htm

E.Y.I
**VIRGINIA'S FOREST
OUR COMMON WEALTH
STATE OF THE FOREST 2006**

The most recent report concludes: "As the population of Virginia continues to grow

and people and businesses move into more traditional rural areas, the importance of maintaining our forests for all uses will become a greater challenge. It is very important that Virginia not only protects the amount of forest land it has now, but also ensures that sufficient well-managed "working forests" are available to provide the products and services we will need in the future. From a strong industrial base providing annual economic outputs of more than **\$25.2 billion** to a wide-ranging array of forest-related values that contribute an additional **\$4.2 billion** plus, the forests of Virginia provide more than **\$29.44 billion** in economic output annually. In addition, our forests satisfy many environmental, social and spiritual needs. Today, Virginia's forests are healthy and diverse, yet they are constantly changing and their future is threatened by population growth and other socioeconomic pressures." www.dof.virginia.gov/resources/pub-2006-12-State-Of-Forest.pdf

COMPLETE WINTER'S PREPARATIONS FOR SPRING

If you have not done so, now is the time to get equipment ready for spring grounds maintenance and landscaping projects. Mowers and other power equipment needs to be serviced. Don't guess at what needs to be done, use the operator's manual, and check that all tasks and adjustments were done to standard. Sharpen and balance blades, to include the extra ones on hand used to swap-out during the season. Dispose of fluids and other items properly and safely. Doing so will extend the life of your power equipment, its engine, increase its efficiency, and minimize downtime. And don't forget hand tools. These need to be checked for damage and repaired or replaced; they also need to be sharpened and put in tip-top shape. Be ready to roll!

BENEFITS OF GREEN MANURING

Based on Canadian research, Brenda Frick, Organic Agriculture Centre of Canada, concludes that "Green manures increase the biochemical activity of the soil - more nitrogen and carbon is found in the soil, in the bodies of microbes. Green manures increase bacteria, filamentous fungi, yeast and nitrifying bacteria in the soil." The increased activity of the soil microbes is especially important in organic agriculture where cycled nutrients are not supplemented with chemical inputs. These studies add further evidence that including green manures in rotation will build soil structure, reduce erosion, and increase the biological function of soils.

www.oacc.info/NewspaperArticles/na_microbes_manure.asp

CALIFORNIA PACK TRIALS

Start Apr 14 and end Apr 22. See the Feb 2007 issue of GrowerTalks for complete listings of companies, dates and locations. www.growertalks.com/archive/articles/2168.asp

EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES
BASIC SOIL SCIENCE – TWO DAY SHORT COURSE

This intensive Virginia Tech taught two-day short course will be held May 15-16 in Charlottesville. The course focuses upon understanding soil physical, chemical and morphological properties in natural and managed landscapes. The course will stress relationships among basic soil properties, water quality and various land use issues. Additional information (location, fees, CEUs) and registration forms on the web at www.cses.vt.edu/revegetation/outreach.html.

PESTICIDE APPLICATOR RECERTIFICATION COURSES

2007 Calendar of Courses - Planned or Pending Approval for Recertification of Virginia Certified Commercial Pesticide Applicators is on the VDACS website www.vdacs.virginia.gov/pesticides/pending.shtml.

Also *make sure you read and understand* [Applicator Regulatory Changes](#) and [Applicator Responsibilities](#).

Make sure you have the latest study materials as new exams started being used in January.

LANDSCAPERS BMP'S CLASSES: 6 MAR, APR 3

These are for the Professional Landscape Industry -- Learn the current research based recommendations from Virginia Tech. Classes held first Tuesday of each month from 8am to 10am at the York County Public Library (Route 17 & Battle Rd), Yorktown. For class topics and reservations contact York (757-898-4940) or James City County (757-564-2170) Extension offices. Also at:

www.yorkcounty.gov/vce/upcomingevents/upcomingeventpg.htm

Mar 13-16, MAC-ISA Arborist Certification Course

Montgomery College, Germantown, MD 24 CEU's
Contact: macisa@hughes.net 703-753-0499
www.mac-isa.org

Mar 15-16, Certified Irrigation Contractor Class

University of Maryland, College Park, MD Contact:
paul@hydrologix.com 703-536-7080
www.irrigation.org

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"WHACKY WINTER WEATHER WORRIES"

This feature article is a condensation of VT Turf Team's *Crop and Soil Environmental News*, "Whacky Winter Weather Worries" Jan 2007. See their website at www.ext.vt.edu/news/periodicals/cses/2007-01/winter_worries.html for the complete article which has more detailed analysis and advice. The abnormally warm winter temperatures for much of December and early January followed by a very colder late January continuing into mid February but back to normal by late February have caused lots of turf managers to scratch their heads and wonder just what this means later when spring officially arrives in late March. Now their view from a turf manager's perspective as a result of this winter's whacky weather.

What's going on with our turfgrasses?

Warm-season grasses (WSG) are a special concern, especially in the Piedmont and Tidewater regions of Virginia because of the extreme cold of late January. Most WSG had not gone fully dormant and extreme cold with varying levels of winter hardening are worrisome. Degrees of winterkill are virtually impossible to predict, but extreme temperatures are considered a major contributor. Other limiting factors (soil properties, disease, moisture extremes, traffic, etc.) often compound winterkill. "Spring kill" is often as likely as winterkill during seasons when WSG get an early start on spring growth and then get heavily damaged by a late freeze. To ascertain possible winterkill severity this spring, remove plugs and look for pliable, fleshy stems and roots that have healthy color (creamy white for rhizomes and roots, and very light green for stolons), bring numerous plugs indoors and see how completely they green. Another field technique is lay clear plastic on the turf and after just a few days see how much turf is alive. To combat late-season freezes, athletic field managers might use turf blankets on their bermudagrass fields, but for the rest of us the most important factor will be to not promote excessive late winter/early spring growth by heavy N fertilization when there is still the potential for a freeze.

What about diseases?

The major concern is spring dead spot (SDS) severity on bermudagrass. There is nothing that can be done about SDS at this time, so if wide scale damage is evident this spring, be prepared to regrass or to encourage regrowth with appropriate N fertility programs. Dollar spot is being reported on cool-season grasses (CSG) during the record warmth of December and January. The cold snap of late January should put a cease to this activity, but if above average temperatures return in late winter/early spring, anticipate that you will have to initiate your preventative treatment programs a little earlier than usual. Similar strategies apply to managing summer patch and Rhizoctonia blight: they will show up a little earlier if the weather is warmer than usual.

What about weeds?

Warmer temperatures are conducive to winter annual weeds (henbit, chickweed, lawn burweed, etc.) control with most of the standard two and three-way postemergent herbicides labeled for this use. Remember that thick populations of winter weeds go hand in hand with heavy summer annual grass pressure following the death of the winter weeds.

Crabgrass: A sacrificial population of crabgrass emerged in eastern Virginia and was then killed by the extreme cold. But this will NOT make a big difference, plenty more seed left. A healthier, thicker stand of grass resulting from a warm winter will provide the best weed control possible. Preemergence herbicide application dates will move up a week or two as compared to average years, but the only way to really know this is by charting growing degree-days. Growing degree-days are calculated as the average of the maximum and minimum temperature for a given day minus the base temperature for crabgrass germination (50 F). Thus, a maximum of 75 and minimum of 27 gives us one growing degree-day. If the value is negative, zero growing degree-days are added to the running total. Crabgrass starts emerging when the running total reaches 70 to 140 units. You can also keep an eye on soil temperatures and expect emergence after 4 to 5 days of temps reaching 55 to 58 F. Forsythia bloom is usually a good indicator in northern climates with crabgrass emergence occurring at 50% bloom drop but plants like Forsythia, dogwood, and daffodil will probably be less useful this year due to the sporadic warming trends in December and January. Finally, preemergence program and subsequent strategy for renovating damaged areas must come together. Newer seeded bermudagrasses give us an excellent option for rejuvenating damaged areas, but these seeded grasses are sensitive to crabgrass herbicides and may not be seeded for as much as four months following treatment with a crabgrass preemergence herbicide. If you expect winterkill, consider using postemergence crabgrass herbicides such as quinclorac (Drive) or MSMA until after new bermudagrass has become established and then follow with a preemergence treatment. Annual bluegrass was flowering in early January all across Virginia. Plants will be larger, and seedhead production discontinuous. If you are using Growing Degree Day models to time plant growth regulator applications, expect to be going out earlier and expect seedhead suppression to be more difficult. If you find your chemical seedhead controls lacking, remember that vertical mowing and increased mowing frequency can drastically improve putting green conditions but the effects are short lived.

The increase in winter weeds due to warm temperatures increases the desire for broad-spectrum vegetation control on dormant turf. Much concern has been voiced recently over use of glyphosate (Roundup) on semi-dormant bermudagrass and zoysiagrass. If you plan to "burn down" winter weeds and your turfgrass is not as dormant as you like, keep the following points in mind: Roundup at 12 oz/A does not kill bermudagrass and will only slow spring greenup slightly, regardless of dormancy state. DO NOT SPOT TREAT ROUNDUP on semi-dormant turf, rather, use uniform blanket sprays instead. Apply the half rate (6 oz/A) in two directions to avoid "streaking" caused by Roundup overlaps that may delay greenup for 20+ days. Alternative herbicides are available that are safer than Roundup on semi-dormant turf but control less weeds or need repeat treatment and may be much more expensive. These include, but are not limited to, diquat (Reward), trifloxysulfuron (Monument), simazine (Princep), foramsulfuron (Revolver), metsulfuron (Manor), sulfosulfuron (Certainty), carfentrazone (Quicksilver) and several broadleaf herbicides that contain two- and three-way combinations of 2,4-D, dicamba, MCPP, and similar active ingredients.

What about insect activity this spring?

Field sampling in mid-January showed that the grubs were still at a 5 to 6 inch depth and had not begun their ascent in the root zone. Standard grub control programs and timing will likely be appropriate again in 2007.

VT Turf Team Concluded: Hopefully this article will better equip you to make informed decisions regarding your turfgrasses this spring and educate your clientele about the expectations (or lack thereof) with our turfgrasses following a roller coaster of a winter. See their complete article at www.ext.vt.edu/news/periodicals/cses/2007-01/winter_worries.html for more detailed analysis and advice.